- he carth forgets the kiss of spring; down our happy woodland way ay mists go wandering.
- have forgotten too, they say; et. does no stealthy memory creep ong the mist wreaths ghostly gray here spell-bound violets sleep? send your thoughts sometimes to stray paths that knew our lingering feet, thought walks there this many a day, nd they, at least, may meet.

AGAINST HUMAN NATURE.

BY MARIA LOUISE POOL.

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## A LETTER.

She was hurrying along the road with her shawl wrapped so closely about her that her thin shoulders, with their sharp bones, were defined so plainly that one could not help being

Her shawl was striped blue and white, the blue having gone into the white and the white into the blue on that occasion, long ago, when its owner tried the experiment of washing the gar-

She always said she "guessed she made a mistake in puttin' sody into the water; but she shouldn't make the same mistake again; there was that much about it "

She were a black straw hat with what was called a "dish brim." This brim made an excellent shade now over the apper half of her face. Only the narrow chin and small mouth were in sunlight. This light revealed relentlessly the two long wrinkles, one on each side of the mouth, and the sagging of the cheeks which begins to come soon after middle age. Where is the patent medicine man who will take away that last dreadful sign of the years from the aging woman? In doing that he will annihilate time and will also become fabulously rich.

Not that Almina Drowdy would have employed any such means. She would have said that the Lord had seemed to make women on purpose to grow old, 'n' she didn't reckon she was so foolish as to try to stop the Lord's work. She'd had her time of being young and not being exactly a fright either, and what were you to expect?that you'd have more'n one chance in this world? And now Miss Drowdy had come to a dish hat and a faded shawl, and to a sublime unconcern as to how her dress "hung."

The road stretched out white and dusty be fore her; it looked as if it would never end. But Miss Drowdy knew that just beyond the farther clump of white birches there was a turn, and beyond the turn there was a house. It was to this place that she was going.

She glanced up at the sun. Then she walked

"I hadn't ought to have come out," she thought; "'n' my bread a-rising. Well, if I have to eat sour bread it's my own lookout. I ain't got no men folks, thank the Lord, to find fault!" Before she reached the corner she put her hand down suddenly to her skirt and then stooped still lower till she touched the bottom of her deep pocket. She pulled out a letter and

"It'd been a great joke if I'd got the wrong one," she said, "I have so many," with a laugh that softened the lines in her face wonderfully, and gave some hint of what the face had been fifteen or twenty years ago.

Five minutes later she had opened the outer back door of a little house which had so long an "L" that it was a great deal more L than house. But by this time the visitor had carefully dropped all appearance of hurry; she entered leisurely.

'That you, Alminy?"

The question was put by a woman who sat in a low rocker by the north window.

This woman was sewing buttons on the vamps of shoes with a rapidity that made the very air twinkle about her. Her needle and thread hesitated for the briefest space as she spoke, then they went on again.

"Yes," said the caller, "it's me-I should think, Livy, you'd about perish with them buttons.

the hand suspended as she answered: "I do hope and believe it ain't got to any of um | whereby a woman could settle.

so far to-day. But they ain't seemed to hurt him a mite." "No," said Alminy, "they agree with him first-

rate. I d'know but shoe buttons are better'n milk for children of his age."

"You always make fun of everything, Alminy," said the other, reproachfully.

"Do I? Well, I'm thankfui I can make fun," was the response. "The land knows there's no

need of trying to be solemn in this world." After this there was a silence for several minutes, during which the newcomer watched her sister intently. For the two women were sisters. I s'pose that's why he named his daughter so. though there was not even a "family look" in

common between them. "I s'pose there ain't any news, is there?" at last asked Olivia.

Alminy hesitated slightly before she replied; "I had a letter yesterday," she said finally, "and I didn't sleep a wink last night."

"Mercy sake!" exclaimed Livy, "I didn't know as you was correspondin' with anybody."

'No more I ain't." Livy waited; but she kept on working as she waited. She knew that her sister would tell her news when she was ready to tell it, and that she would not tell it before. She had learned long ago that "It was no use to waste breath question-

ing Alminy." At last she glanced at her companion. She saw that her sister's gaze was fixed in an unseeing way upon the window. She saw also that the hard, rough hands were clasped tightly on the gingham apron which Alminy had neglected to take off before she started from the house. In her anxiety Livy could not sew fast enough, Her thimble presently caught in her thread; she gave the thread a twitch and broke it. She began to be afraid that the nan would come for the case of shoes before they were finished. She wished that Alminy would speak; or else she wished she had stayed at home.

Finally Livy's patience gave out. She tried to thread her needle and could not. "I'll bet a dollar I've broken the eye to this

needle!" she exclaimed. "That last paper wasn't worth a cent.' "I wouldn't let Freddy git to the needles,"

Alminy, rousing, "they might not be as good for him as buttons. I s'pose some things are really better for a baby's inside than others." The speaker laughed nervously.

to ask her sister to stop being so provoking, but

she shut her lips tightly and did not speak. In a moment Alminy rose from her chair and began walking about the room. She took off her hat and threw it on the table. There were wrinkles of excitement upon her forehead, which was still delicate and almost handsome, with its soft hair, which would "ring up," lying loosely about it. She would have scoffed at the idea, but she was still an interesting woman; that is, many a stranger would have been likely to think so, but here in her native village, no one thought anything about her, save that she was an old maid and lived by herself, with money enough to support her in that small way which called for a very little sum per week.

Alminy paused at length by her sister's chair. "I s'pose you remember Roger Crawford, don't Livy put down her shoe and looked up with

wide-open eyes.
"Oh, Alminy!" she cried, "of course I remember him. But I didn't know but you'd forgotten

him. I hoped you had." "Forgotten him!" repeated Alminy. "That

ain't likely. But I must own I ain't thought of him so much late years. God does let time as it goes on, do something for us. If He didn't I d'know what we should do."

The speaker's hands were hanging beside her they were shut fast as hands involuntarily that at some intolerable memory. Lavy reached forward and took one of those hands in both of her own. The buttons feil rat-

tling on the floor from her lap as she did so. "More buttons for Freddy," Alminy sail, a flash of fun coming to her gray eyes; but the fun subsided instantly.

"You don't mean you've heard from him?" asked Livy, keeping hold of her sister's hand. "Oh, no: no indeed. But I've heard from his

"Then he's dead?" "I don't know. Read that, then tell me what you think. I'm sure I don't know what to think

myself." Miss Drowdy drew the letter from her pocket and tossed it into her sister's lap. Then she began walking about the room again. Her itps were pressed tightly together; the lines on her forehead were still more marked; the darkness under her eyes was heavier.

But still there was a curious kind of triumph in her aspect. A triumph as of one who has again wakened from half a life into a life con taining more than the sordid everyday cares. Suffering might be life, but torpor was not, even though it might be mistaken for peace.

Olivia was not, as she would have said, much used to reading writing. She held the sheet in both hands and held it far from her, though she had not come to spectacles, and could see perfectly well. Somehow she could not quite bring her mind to the written words. She was thinking of Roger Crawford. The thought of him had not crossed her mind for years. Now it seemed to her that she recalled everything about him "in a flash."

Roger and Alminy had certainly been what is called "in love" with each other; and see how it all turned out! Olivia did not understand anything about being in love, and therefore she did not in the least believe in any such state. It was unnatural and really quite indelicate for a woman to feel anything more than respect and a moderate liking for a man.

If it had not been for that affair with Roger, and for the fact that Alminy had a silly streak of sentimentality in her somewhere, she might have married Dr. Newcomb ten years ago, and been living now in that brick-ended two-story house right in the middle of the village.

Dr. Newcomb had lost his wife and Alminy Drowdy was his first choice for his second part-

Olivia, comfortably married and settled, had argued and pleaded with her sister to become Mrs. Newcomb.

"There ain't a thing against the doctor." she "You can't say, Alminy, as there's a thing said. against him; now, can you?" "Why, no, of course, I can't. Who said there

was?" had been the response. Olivia had gazed despairingly at her sister. "And you like him, don't you?"

"Yes, indeed." "Then why don't you marry him?"

At this point in every conversation Alminy had laughed in the most irritating way as sh "I don't know as it's any reason why I should

marry a man because there isn't anything against him, and because I like him. I know half-a-dozen men in this village whom there isn't anything against, and whom I like." "But they don't want to marry you," said her

"No, they don't, and that's a fact. So that

puts them out of the question. And then Alminy had laughed again, and her sister had sighed and said that there wa'n't no use: Alminy was jest as odd as she could be.

And she had added warningly, "You know you're growin' older every day. The men'il be lockin' for younger women. You can't

expect many more chances." "I know it," was the reckless response.

In her secret heart Olivia had wondered if Roger Crawford, or rather the memory of him, had had anything to do with making Alminy so How many has the baby swallered this morn- odd. But Alminy had been a little odd always. and of course she would grow more and more so, since she refused "to settle." What could you strange and monstrous thing to the length of a long, new needleful. She held expect of a woman who deliberately refused to settle? And there was but one way made known

All these thoughts and memories were in a jumble in Olivia's mind as she sat there with the

shoe vamps about her trying to read the letter her sister had given her

She turned over the sheets and looked at the name signed. She read it aloud.
"Temple—Temple Crawford. What's that

mean? That ain't no kind of a name. Is it a girl? What makes you think it's a girl?" "I think so from the letter," answered Alminy,

She stopped her walk in front of her sister. "Temple was Roger's mother's maiden name.

He thought a lot of his mother." The tones of the speaker were so different from her ordinary voice that Olivia looked up at her in a kind of fright.

"Here," she said, extending the paper ,"I wish but her companion did not notice the hesitation. you'd read it. 'Taint very plain writing. I s'pose you've made it out once, 'n' you can agin.

Jest read it to me, will you?" Alminy took the letter and, still standing, read

it aloud. "To the one who was Almina K. Drowdy,

Hoyt, Massachusetts. "Dear Madame: I had a letter from father last night. He said he thought he should be dead by the time I got it. He went to Manitoba for his

health almost a year ago, and I haven't seen him since. You see, I don't know which to tell first, for I'm not used to writing, and my pen won't say anything I want it to. I'll write just as things come into my head. I'm a girl, though folks don't seem to think so when they just hear my name without seeing me. My grandmother was a Temple; my father always said that there wasn't any better name under the canopy. So he named me that. It doesn't make any difference to me. My father was a queer kind of man, I reckon I love him, because he's my father; but I get along mighty well without him. And I do as I please now, and I make Sally do as I please, and Bartholomew. You ought to see Sally; but then you will see her, of course, when you come down. Here is the check that father sent for you to come down with. You see your name is on it. He wrote he was sure you'd come just the same without the check if you had means; but he didn't know whether you had means or not. He wanted me to be sure and tell you that I needed you. He said that would be enough for you. But he's just plumb mistaken about one thing; I don't need you one bit. Livy's eyes flashed with annoyance. She wanted I'm getting along splendid. I ride horseback most of the time. Some days 1 ride for hours without meeting up with a single solltary soul. I like it. I always have some of my dogs with me, and Little Bull would just as lief take a piece out of the calf of a man's leg as swallow the liver wing of a roast chicken. So, you see, I

needn't be afraid as long as Little Bull is with me. He's a common yellow dog, but I know you'll like him when you get acquainted with him. That is, if you ain't one of the fool kind of folks who are afraid of dogs anyway. If you are afraid you'll be bowdaciously sorry you came here, for there are more dogs than people here, and I'm glad of that. Bowdacious is one

of Sally's words, and I think it's excellent. It's so expressive. I like words that mean something. But father's always tried to have me talk what he calls English. If he's really dead I reckon I ought to try more than ever to talk English. I can talk it well enough if I want to. How my pen does go on! But I knew it was just no use at all for me to try to write as the complete letter-writer instructs. I wouldn't

write that a-way if I died for not doing it. "I want you to address me like this: Miss

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Temple Crawford, Busbee, North Carolina. That's three miles away and part of it on the State road, and the State road isn't much fun; but I ride to Bushee two or three times a week, and I shall go every day when it's time to begin to expect to hear from you. You must tell me when you think you'll arrive. You are to stop at Asheville Junction, and not go on to Asheville, you know. I'll be there with the wagon. If you are afraid of dogs I wouldn't advise you to think of coming at all. If you do come and turn out to be the kind I like I shall be powerful glad to have you here. With great respect, I remain your obedient servant.

"TEMPLE CRAWFORD. "Postscriptum.--I wrote this letter three days igo, and now, when I come to read it over, I'm afraid I haven't said enough about your coming. And I've read father's letter over again, and there are these sentences in it. It seems to me somehow you ought to know these sentences; Tell Almina Drowdy that if she has not forgotten the old days-if she really cared as she thought she cared, and as I, too late, found that I cared, she will come to my daughter. That is all I ask. When she knows Temple she will de cide whether to take her home to New-England. But first, she must see the child in her own home. She will not be likely to understand the girl otherwise. And she must understand her before she judges her.'

"I don't know what this means, but perhaps you do. It sounds sentimental to me, and if there was ever anything that father was not it was that. Don't forget to let me know, so I can be at the Junction with the wagon and the mules.'

Alminy stopped reading. Her hand dropped with the sheets held tightly.

It is impossible to tell how very strangely this epistle had sounded in that prim, decorous little New-England room.

Olivia pushed the remaining vamps from her lap in her helpless astonishment.

"Mercy, Alminy!" she exclaimed in a half Then, as her sister did not speak, she whisper. added, in the same voice: "You ain't thinkin'it ain't crossed your mind to think of such a thing as-as goin', has it?"

The two sisters stared at each other. But in truth Alminy did not see her companion in the least, though her eyes were fixed upon her. She was thinking with that vague intentness which is, after all, but a phase of memory. She was seeing herself at twenty years. She was wondering why she did not feel older now. "Say," began Olivia, "you ain't goin' to tell

me that you have got the slightest idea-why, it's out of all sense! It's jest outrageous! I sh'd like to know what Roger Crawford was thinkin' about. I declare I should! The other woman tried to rouse herself.

"What?" she asked. "You ainn't Estenin' a natom," remarked

consists a section of affection. But she loved her children, though she never caressed them, and acreed to think that caresses were an infailible sign of what she would have called "Harnes".

"Well, no, I haven"t. But you needn't be mad about it," was the answer.

Alminy looked down at the letter, which she now carefully folded.

"The all worked up," remarked Olivia, "and it's so sudden, too." She tried to speak caimly.

"Most things that we don't know anything, so that had nothing against him?

She turned and sat down in a chair near. She bent forward and rested her chin on her two hands. She was never conventional about anything, even her attitudes, and this lack of conventionality had always worried her sister. What could be expected of a woman who had refused to marry a man when she had nothing against him?

In her secret heart Olivia was convinced that such a secret heart Olivia gained at the rister. She tried to speak caimly.

The system of affection. But she loved her childed the marry of the secret heart olivia was a long time before Almina had spoken.

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It was a long time before the mother, should intrude upon ventional about any bent forward and rested her chin on her two hands. She was never conventional about any bent forward and rested her chin on her two hands. She was never conventional about any bent forward and rested her chin on her two hands. She was never conventional about any bent forward and rested her chin on her two hands. She was never conventional about any bent forward and rested her chin on her two hands. She was never conventional about any bent forward and rested her chin on her two hands. She was never conventional abou

speak meekly as she said that "she s posed when the time come that Alminy would tell what she thought of a letter like that. As for her, Olivia Wilson, she was free to say it was the strangest thing she ever seen. How old was that girl, that Temple Crawford, any way."
"I don't know"

"I don't know"
"Ain't you any idea?"
"No, of course not."
Alminy sat up straight. Her face had such an unusual expression upon it that her sister was really frightened. She rose and moved to the door. With her hand on the latch, she said she would get a few drops of red lavender and some water. It didn't make much matter what kind of a spell was coming on; red lavender was good for all spells, whatever their nature.

Alminy burst into a laugh, rose and went to her sister's side. She put one hand on 'Olivia's shoulder.

"I do wish I believed in red lavender as much as you do, Livy," she exclaimed. "But I don't need any now." "Can't you relieve my mind, Alminy?" wistfully

asked the other.
"If I could relieve my own mind I'd relieve

"If I could remee my ars," was the answer.
"I shouldn't think you'd give such a matter a thought."
"Well, I do. I laid awake all last night givin" it thought

Oh. Alminy!" "Oh, Alminy".
Olivia's comely, unwrinkled face began to pucker as if its owner were about to cry.
"But how can you go?" she asked, despairingly.
"You can't leave your hens or your pig; 'n' you live so far off 'taint handy for my husband to do

live so far of taint namy for my indexing to say your chores."
"You could take my hens, 'n' you could eat my pig." replied Alminy.
Olivia now began really to weep.
"So you are goin." she cried. "'N' North Caroliny's a dretful place. 'N' Freddy 'll grow up, 'n' you won't know any of his cunnin' ways."
"Oh dear" responded Alminy. "I told you I

"Oh, dear!" responded Alminy, "I told you I ain't made up my mind. I guess I'll go home now 'n' p'raps I shall have some light."

The speaker walked to the door and opened it. She passed through it and Mrs. Wilson returned to her while. The speaker walked to the door and opened it. She passed through it and Mrs. Wilson returned to her chair, gathering up the scattered vamps in a confused way. She was "all upset in her mind," as she told herself, and she began to fear seriously that the man would come for the case before they were all buttoned.

She was trying to thread her needle, and failing on account of the blur over her eyes, when she heard a sound in the next room, and in a moment her sister entered again.

She had a child in her arms. This child was rubbing its eyes with its fists, and yawning till one saw the red roof if its mouth and its few milky-white upper teeth.

"What do you think he was doing now?" asked his aunt. "He was oft the hed and had got as far's the suller door."

The mother sprang up and held out her arms. "Who left that suller door open?" she exclaimed. "That door "li oe the death of me yet. Somebody's always leavin' of it open. Give him to me. It's no use for me to try to git that case of shoes done, for i can't do it."

Almina put Freddy in his mother's lap, and now really started for home. She turned when she was in the yard to look back. She saw

Almina put Freddy in his mother's lap, and now really started for home. She turned when she was in the yard to look back. She saw Olivia rocking back and forth with her boy's head on her shoulder. Olivia did not see her sister at all. It was as if she had forgotten her. "Why should not I go?" was the question in the woman's mind. "Livy has Freddy. I'm glad she's got him. And I—why," with a smile, "I've got my hens and my pig. I ought to have had a dog. Yes," beginning to walk very fast, "there wa'n't only one reason why I shouldn't have had a dog—and that was 'cause I should have got to lovin' it so. It's such a foolish thing to git lovin'—now" with another smile, "there ain't no such danger 'bout hens and a pig; though I did hear of a woman that set an awfui store by a hen. But, as for me, the way a hen'll pull up one leg out of sight, look at you with one eye, and wink upward, 's enough for me. I can't love a hen." we a hen." Nevertheless, when Alminy Drowdy reached

Nevertheless, when Alminy Drowdy reached her own home she went to the barn and took some corn in her apron. She flung this corn about in the yard calling in a high voice as she did so, "Cut. cut." and the white Brahma hens began to gather, picking up the corn so fast that their bills on the gravel made a noise like falling hell.

hat. But I'd give the pig to Freddy, 'n' he could call it his."

The woman turned from the flock of eager fowls. She looked over the fields upon which the early spring sun was shining. The meadow opposite was beginning to show green places; the clumps of young willows—which ought to be the clumps of young willows—which ought to be a clump. rooted out—were revealing in their slender stems that the sun had come again to the north. There was a smell of warm, wet earth in the air. Alminy sniffed that odor. She didn't believe the ground smelled like that anywhere else in the

pron. She felt the letter from Carolina in her ocket. She knew that she longed to see Temple She aint had no bringin' up," she said, as if

"She aint had no bringin' up," she said, as if to the hens. And then:

"I s'pose I could let my house, somehow."

A fever seemed to have entered into her blood. She did not know that she had already decided to go to Carolina. She did not know it even the next day, when her sister came over early in the morning to inquire. She told Olivia that she couldn't seem to make up her mind. Sometimes she was drawn one way and sometimes another. She couldn't see her pat' clear.

She couldn't see her path clear, "Can't see it clear?" cried Livy. Then she stopped. What was the use? It was incredible to her that her sister could give a thought to

to her that her sister could give a thought to such a letter as that.

She looked around the room, as if in search of some means by which she could impress upon Almina the strangeness of her even considering such a request from Roger Crawford's daughter. She had never quite understood about Crawford. She was three years younger than her sister, and had been not quite eighteen when the affair happened. It had not been considered necessary to inform her in regard to any of the particulars. She only knew that Almina had particulars. She only knew that Almina been ready to be married and that she did marry. Crawford did not come. Instead the came a letter from him somewhere in the So came a letter from him somewhere in the South where he had to go on business. Almina had received the letter the day before the date set for the wedding. She had gone upstairs to her own room to read it. After a while she had come down to the kitchen, where her mother and Olivia were. No one had been surprised that a letter should arrive; there had been one nearly every day since Roger had gone six weeks before.

Olivia remembered to the minutest detail all concerning that time. But no one told her any-thing. When she had asked her mother what was the matter, she had been answered that ""things had turned out so's there wa'nt goin' to be any wedding. Other arrangements had been made."

And that was all. Naturally she had almost And that was all. Naturally she had almost forgotten Roger Crawford in all these years. But now she recalled him, and hated him with renewed freshness, as with the thought of him came the memory of what her sister's face had been then, and for iong after.

But Almina had borne up bravely. She had informed her friends "that the engagement was broken," and when asked where Mr. Crawford was she had replied that he was obliged to stay in the South. She did not even specify that he was in North Carolina. But every one knew he was there, for the woman who kept the post-

there, for the woman who kept the post-saw that his letters of late had been postmarked at Asheville, and as she knew, there-fore, a great many others knew, for what post-mistress is going to keep to herself a knowledge But no one was aware of one fact which Al

But no one was aware of one fact which all mina communicated to her mother that night. Mrs. Drowdy was a woman not given to the expression of affection. But she loved her children, though she never catessed them, and seemed to think that caresses were an infallible sign of what she would have called "flatness."

It was in the middle of the night that she had risen noiselessly and gone into her daugh-

explained, and the marriage take place, though she felt that she, herself, could never forgive Roger Crawford, and never wanted to see him. But she had decided that the would appear to forgive him for her child's sake.
"Yes," said the girl, "he was married four days
ago. He wrote to me right away after—

after"—
Almina's voice stopped.
Mrs. Drowdy waited a moment before she said, in a dry, even voice:
"He is a scamp, and you are well red of him. You'll live to see the day when you'll despise him, 'n' thank the Lord you ain't his wife."
"I wish I could despise him now," said the girl

girl.

The next moment she cried out in a passionate voice: "Oh, how can I stop loving him! It will kill me to go on loving him like this!"

"No," said the mother sternly, "it won't kill you, either. I know bout human nature. Things don't kill. I'm goin' to try to think of something to take up your mind."

Neither mother nor daughter slept that night; but they did not talk any more, save for a single word now and then.

but they did not talk any more, save for a single word now and then.

When Mrs. Drowdy, in the early dawn of a summer morning, went back to the room where her husband was now dressing, she was met by the anxious question:

"How's Alminy?"
"I guess she's as well's she can be. That vile retch is married to somebody else. He told her Benjamin Drowdy did not speak; but he looked murderous. His wife went on.

His wife went on.

"I hope you c'n spare the money to let her go to her Aunt Johnson's for a few months. It'll be a great change; and Cordelia Johnson is a good woman, and a wise woman, if she is my sister. Everything'll be new. Alminy'll begin to git interested after a while."

Mr. Drowdy did spare the money. The Johnsons lived in Boston, and they had money enough to travel a little when they chose. Almina spent nearly a year with them. When she came home she looked so well that everybody said that "Alminy Drowdy was gittin' over her disappointment first-rate. They guessed she hadn't much deep feelin' after all."

miny Drowdy was gittin' over her disappointment first-rate. They guessed she hadn't much deep feelin' after all."

Olivia Wilson felt her hatred for Roger Crawford revive as she gazed at her sister in consternation that Almina could feel anything but repulsion at the thought of Crawford's daughter. And what a letter that girl had written.

"I'm supprised," said Livy, "that you don't dislike even the thought of Temple Crawford."

"Why should I dislike her?" Almina fixed her clear, gray eyes on her sister's face.

"Why? Because—because—why, I never seen nothin' so outrageous. And the way that man treated you! Of course, he never loved you!"

"I know he didn't treat me well," was the response, "but I think he loved me; and"—here the woman's voice changed greatly—"I've decided that I've loved him all these years."

"Oh, Alminy!"

"Oh, Alminy!"
This was what Olivia always said when other words failed her. She made up her mind then and there that she would not speak another and there is the words to be shown in the said of the and there that she would not speak another word on the subject of her sister's going to Carolina. But she broke her resolve so far as to say in a melancholy manner a few days later that she didn't see how Alminy could go away when Freddy hadn't half got through having such cunnin' ways.

But Alminy did go. She gave the hens to the

But Alminy did go. She gave the hens to the widow George and the pig to Freddy. She found a woman to live in her house until it could be let, and in one week from the time she had received Temple Crawford's letter she was in Mr. Wilson's open wagon and he was driving her to the station to take the cars that connected with the Fall River boat to New-York.

Her sister, having left Freddy in charge of a neighbor, was sitting on the back seat with her, and was crying gently and exasperatingly all the way.

Once Mr. Wilson looked back over his shoulder and asked with an impatience which he could

Once Mr. Wilson looked back over his shoulder and asked with an impatience which he could not restrain:
"Livy, ain't you 'bout cried 'nough? This ain't Alminy's funeral—nor mine, neither."
Livy tried to speak steadily as she answered that it might's well be a funeral fur's her feelin's were concerned. that their bills on the gravel made a noise like falling hail.

Almina's face settled into a deep gravity as she watched them.

"Livy's got enough," she said aloud. "I could give 'em to old Widder George. Yes, I could de give 'em to old Widder George. Yes old

But Alminy could not help crying when she hugged her sister at the station before the cars

came.
"If I should happen to stay a good while," she said brokenly, "don't let Freddy forgit me."
"No, no, I won't," sobbed Olivia, and the train rolled along and seemed to sweep up Almina Drowdy into itself and then dash off again." I can't seem to make it seem real," said Livy as she and her husband drove back along the familiar country road.

Livy as she and her husband drove oack alone the familiar country road.

"Then if you can't I do wish you'd stop cryin'," said Mr. Wison. "I'm awful sorry myself she's gone; 'n' I think it's a fool's errand. But Alminy's old enough to do what she pleases. Now, do cheer up, Livy."

So Livy gradually cheered up, and by the time she was back again with Freddy she had begun to be reconciled.

time she was back again with Freedy she had begun to be reconciled. And the neighborhood, after it had raked up that affair about Roger Crawford and talked it all over again, subsided with perfect calmness into the habit of seeing some one else in Alminy's house and in her pew at church. Alminy herself could hardly have had a more strange feeling if she had suddenly cut adrift from this planet and had taken passage for Mars.

strange feeling it she had suddenly cut adritt from this planet and had taken passage for Mars. But she did not regret. With every hour that passed her mind turned more and more strongly from the place she had left and toward the place

from the place she had left and toward the place to which she was journeying.

She believed that she was a hard-hearted wretch, because she did not think more of her sister and of Freddy. Here she smiled.

"Is it possible," she asked herself, "that I'm going where I shan't know how many shoe buttons Freddy swallers, nor how many times the cat scratches him?"

Almina had never been out of Massachusetts, therefore even the houses of Fall River, as seen in the spring twilight, had a foreign look, and she already felt as if she were in a strange land.

when she walked over the planking that led to the steamer she could hardly believe she was in America. Without really having given any thought to the matter, she now knew that she had expected this craft to be a kind of ferry.

There was a crowd of geople. Somehow she was pushed along into a dim, electric-lighted place where women were sitting on magnificently upholstered couches, and where negro men in blue uniforms occasionally walked through, their feet making no noise on the thick carpet. There was a gentle motion; there was the sound of wheels outside hurrying along the wharf, the cries of drivers the ringing of engine bells, and presently a voice somewhere shouted:

"All ashore "I's goin' ashore." and then the enormous bulk that was the steampoat became possessed of a little more motion.

Almina all at once was conscious of a choking sensation. Hardly knowing what she did, she rose and hurried out through the large doors by which had entered the lade; cabin. She was

rose and hurried out through the large doors by which she had entered the lades cabin. She was possessed by a longing to see her country again. She stepped outside, not minding who pushed

She stepped outside, not minding who pushed against her.

There were the shores of Massachusetts sliding away from her. Her hands held tightly the package of lunch which her sister had carefully put up for her. It was not yet dark. The sun had gone down, but there was a cool, apple-green tinge over the west. The air from the land blew in a steady, chill breath.

Almina shivered. She did not know that there were tears on her face.

But when she turned to go book to the cabin it was curlous that she was not thinking about leaving home. The words in her mind were:

"I do wonder why I always think of Reger as a young man," and her thought added coldly. "Mebby he's dead; yes, I s'pose he's dead."

But no tears came. Strangest of all was the fact that from the moment she had contemplated this journey she had felt as if she were young again. She scoffed at this thought, but she could not quite put it away from her. Going by a large mirror she accidentally looked at herself. by a large mirror she accidentally looked at herself. goodness me" she

"Oh, goodness me, she exchanged face, "I guess I rin't so young that everybody 'll be failin' in love with me on this journey."

She sat down on one of the gorgeous chairs and forced herself to eat a doughnut, although wallowing a morsel seemed well-night impos-The stewardess came and asked her if she had

a stateroom.
"I don't think I have," she answered.

tory. She supposed there were folks jest made to find fault with everything.

When she left the boat her mind was strained to the utmost to assure itself that she was acto the utmost to assure user that she was ac-tually in Jersey City, and really in the right car. She knew that cars were always being detached and sent off on other tracks, for no other pur-pose, apparently, than to take people to places where they did not want to go, and to cause

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back again
In recalling the remainder of the journey it seemed to Miss Drowdy that she did nothing but ask conductors if it were really true that she

MR. CROCKETT AND HIS HOUSE.

From The Pall Mall Budget. From The Pall Mail Budget.

The books had overflowed the study into the square hall, and marched upstairs, pervading the house generally. Where there were no books there were pictures, and as I looked at them and asked their histories (for each one had a history), the coming evening cast a shadowy twilight before. "As it's growing dark here," Mr. Crockett said, "I want to show you a place where it is always light till the sun has been forgotten behind the hill. You see, this house and the grounds are my own—



on one side. As we walked we talked. "Whatever changes may come into my life." Mr. Crockett sald, "I hope and intend always to live here in this house, which I love, among the people whom I love and find happiness in working for. My heart is in the hills and moors, I should choke to death if I had to spend my life in a town—even in London, where so many of my best friends stay. Love for the country was born in me, and has grown to be an integral nart of myself. Indeed, if it were not so it would be strange, when you think that I passed all my happy, though curiously lonely, chidhood in the heart of Galloway. My brain is filled with a series of pictures—a sort of panorama of Galloway scenes. All stand out as distinctly before my eyes as these trees, these bushes. And that, by-the-way, is part of a somewhat unique quality which I'm fortunate enough, or if often think) unfortunate enough, to possess, it is absolutely impossible for me to forget a thing I have ever seen, even down through the remotest details. As a schoolboy, I hadn't a memory like my companions, and the lack of it brought me many a scolding. I could learn nothing by heart' as they could; and at college I couldn't fix a lecture I had attended in my mind. The lessons I have learned best in life, early and late, have been 'object leasons.' It is so in small things as well as large, of an almost annoying degree. If I go to the station and walk past a railway train the numbers on the carriages and their sequence linger in my memory for weeks, when I fain would think of something else; and so, what I wish not to cumber my brain with I simply dare not look at. Sometimes, however, the peculiarity does me a very good turn. For instance, I wrote a story called 'Across the Black Water.' I hadn't visited the spot I described sines I was a child, but I ventured to picture it minutely, and when, not long after, I went to the place, I was galed to find that I hadn't made any mistakes. I hope, though, you don't thing I'm boasting of the freulty. I simply regard i



I could not resist a furtive giance at Mr. Crockett as he thus proclaimed himself, and I privately thought that he looked as little like a dragon as it was possible to imagine. Instead, he might well toould one but blind one's self to the modern dress of man, over which Lord Rosebery and all other lovers of the beautiful sigh!) have posed as the model for a Viking, or, perhaps, the hero of his own book, "The Raiders."

We opened the door and stepped into a broad avenue with miles of wood and moorland stretching

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ask conductors if it were really true that she was in the right ear.

Nothing would convince her that she could ever reach Asheville Junction. She could not give her mind to the strange sights which nour by hour glided by her. Afterward she remembered them. She would not take a sleeping-car. Why should she do so, when it was an impossibility for her to sleep a wink?

But she must have been dozing when a woman in a deen scoop bonnet came and sat down be-

there was silence.

Presently the train began to slow. Almina stood up in her place. She forgot her fatigue in her excitement.

Asheville Junction that the containly at Asheville Junction that It was certainly at Asheville Junction the

the mules (To be continued.)